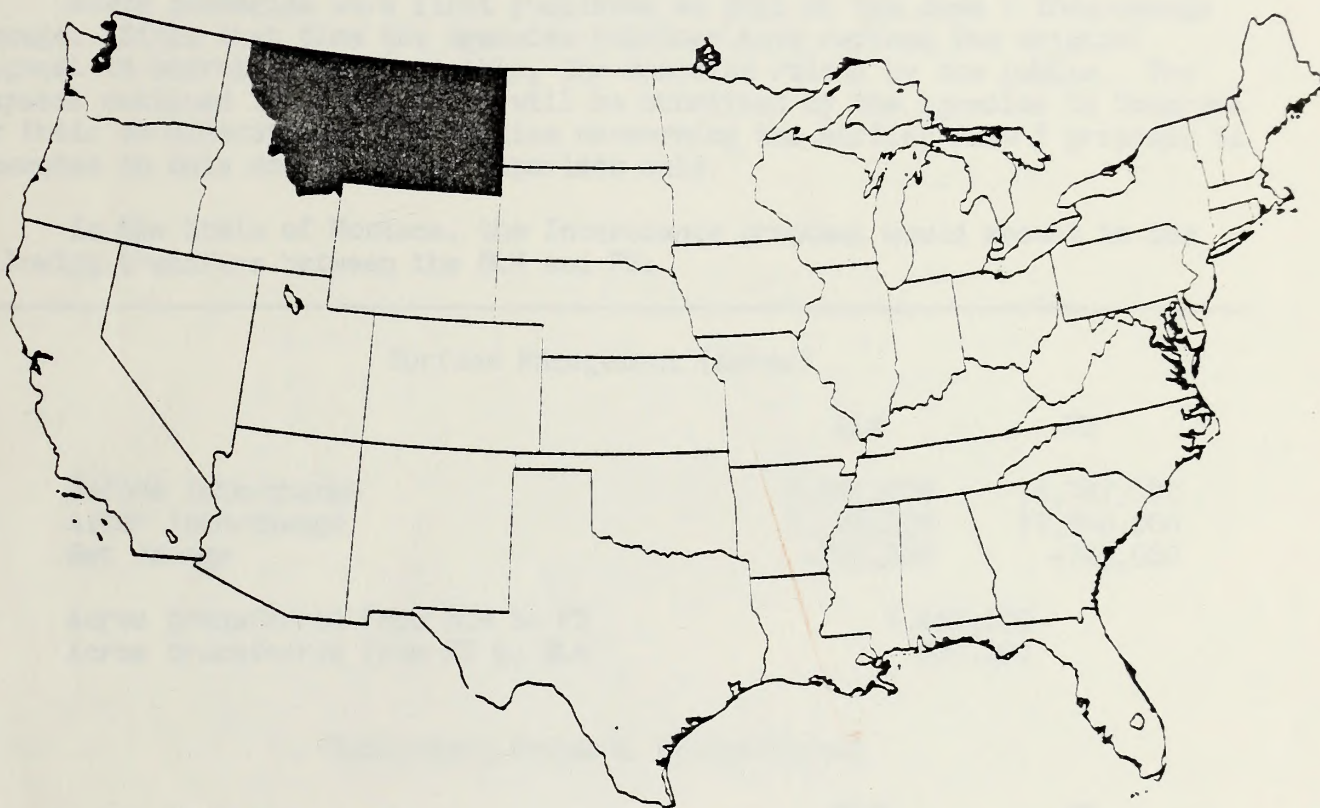




BLM/FS INTERCHANGE

Summary

MONTANA



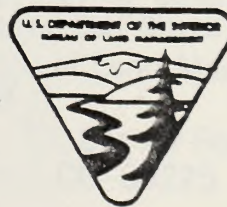
PREPARED BY:

Northern Region
FOREST SERVICE

Montana State Office
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



FEBRUARY 1986



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1986INTERCHANGE IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY
STATE OF MONTANA

I. OVERVIEW

The following summarizes the proposed Interchange for the State of Montana. This summary includes a review of the public involvement, the proposed action, the anticipated costs and savings, and the actions identified during the study that can be taken independently of the Interchange. More detailed information is available for review in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) State Office in Billings or the Forest Service (FS) Regional Office in Missoula.

State summaries were first published as part of the June 7 Interchange package. Since that time the agencies together have refined the original proposal to address, where possible, the concerns raised by the public. The proposal outlined in this summary will be submitted by the agencies to Congress for their consideration. Information concerning the earlier June 7 proposal is presented in this document for comparison only.

In the State of Montana, the Interchange proposal would result in the following transfers between the BLM and FS:

Surface Management (Acres)

	BLM	FS
Before Interchange	8,091,000	16,797,000
After Interchange	7,348,000	17,540,000
Net change	-743,000	+743,000
Acres transferred from BLM to FS	1,462,000	
Acres transferred from FS to BLM	719,000	

Subsurface (Mineral Estate-Acres)

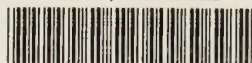
	BLM	FS
Before Interchange	33,879,000	0
After Interchange	15,689,000	18,190,000

All present BLM management responsibility west of the proposed Interchange boundary, which runs east of and roughly parallel to the Continental Divide, would transfer to the FS except for minerals trust responsibility on Indian tribal lands. The BLM would manage lands east of the line, which include the public lands in eastern Montana, a large portion of the Custer National Forest, and a small portion of the Lewis and Clark National Forests.

All communities that currently have a FS or BLM office, or both, would retain an agency office after the Interchange. The existing BLM State Office

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in Billings and the FS Regional Office in Missoula would continue to be maintained in those cities.

Savings would result from a merger of offices located in the same communities, the restructuring of field boundaries to achieve optimum size and balance among subunits, and the elimination of duplicate supervisory and administrative positions in field and headquarters offices. An estimated 66 permanent full-time agency positions would be saved.

Service to the public would be maintained by retaining a BLM office or a FS office in each community where an agency office is now located. In response to public concern regarding access to lands and minerals status records, an Interagency Records Center would be established at the BLM's Montana State Office in Billings.

II. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement has been an integral part of refining the original Interchange proposal. BLM and FS representatives met with the Congressional delegation, the Governor and his staff, industry and user group representatives, and employees in Montana. Public meetings were held in Billings, Butte, Dillon, Great Falls, and Missoula, to discuss the Interchange and to collect comments. The agencies received and answered numerous letters and telephone inquiries. Twenty-eight responses to the Interchange proposal originated in Montana during the formal public review, from June 7 to July 8.

The majority of the commenters supported the goals of the Interchange. Many, however, doubted whether the June 7 proposal would achieve those goals. Several commenters supported the Interchange, stating that the proposal was a "positive step" that would benefit both agencies and citing the possible improvements in public service, opportunities to improve operational efficiency due to the consolidation of intermingled lands, reductions in agency costs, and opportunities to improve the quality of resource management.

The area of primary concern was the proposed transfer of most of the Custer National Forest to the BLM. Commenters were uncertain about BLM management and concerned about the disruption of current operations. One objected only to the proposal to transfer the Ashland Ranger District.

Concerns were expressed about reducing agency personnel in Butte through the merger of the BLM Butte District and Area Offices into the Deerlodge National Forest. The main consideration was the potential impacts on the already depressed local economy.

Other concerns were the agencies' future relationships with grazing organizations, and the availability of minerals records and minerals leasing services. Records availability would be unchanged by the Interchange. Minerals lease case processing would be handled consistently by both agencies, and the transition of jurisdiction over FS lands to the FS would not disrupt public service. Commitments have been made to continue existing agreements with State grazing associations.

After considering alternatives, no changes were made in the boundaries as proposed in the June 7 package. Since the Custer National Forest is generally isolated from other National Forest System lands, management of a large portion of the Forest by the surrounding BLM would be more efficient. Likewise, the BLM Butte District lands would be more efficiently managed by the surrounding National Forests.

Agencies would attempt to minimize the potential effects on the communities by phasing in changes and reducing personnel through attrition. The intent of the agencies in implementing the Interchange would be that the employees would stay with the land, and transfer to the new agency in charge. The agencies would do whatever was possible to minimize impacts, and have made a commitment to offer every employee a job.

III. PROPOSED ACTION

A. Communities Affected

In the five towns where both the BLM and the FS presently have offices, the following actions would take place:

Billings--The BLM State Office and Resource Area Office would remain. The Custer National Forest Supervisor's Office would be merged into these two BLM offices. Personnel from the Custer National Forest would be reassigned to one of the two BLM offices in Billings, transferred to the BLM office in Miles City, or absorbed by other agency offices. Billings would lose an estimated 55 positions. Billings would lose more positions than any other community in Montana. Billings is the largest community in Montana, and the impact of the change would be moderate.

Butte--The FS Deerlodge National Forest Supervisor's Office and Ranger District Office would remain. The BLM Butte Resource Area and District Offices would be merged into these two FS offices. Personnel from the BLM offices would be reassigned to one of the two FS offices in Butte or absorbed by other agency offices. Butte would lose an estimated 40 positions. Already economically depressed, Butte would be negatively impacted by the Interchange.

Dillon--The FS Beaverhead National Forest Supervisor's Office and Ranger District Office would remain. The BLM Dillon Resource Area would be merged into these two FS offices. Dillon would lose only 2 positions.

Great Falls--The FS Lewis and Clark Forest Supervisor's Office would remain. The BLM Great Falls Resource Area would merge into the FS Supervisor's Office and other Lewis and Clark National Forest Ranger Districts. Great Falls would lose an estimated 13 positions, but since it is one of the largest communities in Montana, the impact should be low.

Missoula--The FS Regional Office, Lolo National Forest Supervisor's Office and Missoula Ranger District would remain. The BLM Garnet Resource Area Office would merge into the FS Supervisor's Office and Ranger District Office. Missoula would gain an estimated three positions.

B. Office and Staffing Changes

Currently five communities in Montana house both BLM and FS offices. After the Interchange, this number would reduce to zero.

The Interchange would result in a net personnel savings of 66 positions. These reductions would be accomplished through attrition so no adverse personnel actions would be necessary.

A summary table of the locations and types of offices that would be affected by the Interchange, together with the total staffing change for each location, follows. The proposed office changes and resulting staffing changes are the same as in the June 7 proposal.

Community	Existing Offices	<u>Proposed Changes</u>		<u>Net Staff Change</u>	
		June 7	Revised	June 7	Revised
Billings	BLM SO	BLM SO	BLM SO	-55	-55
	BLM RA	BLM RA	BLM RA		
	FS SO				
Butte	FS SO	FS SO	FS SO	-40	-40
	FS RD	FS RD	FS RD		
	BLM DO				
	BLM RA				
Dillon	FS SO	FS SO	FS SO	- 2	- 2
	FS RD	FS RD	FS RD		
	BLM RA				
Glasgow	BLM RA	NC	NC	+ 5	+ 5
Great Falls	FS SO	FS SO	FS SO	-13	-13
	BLM RA				
Havre	BLM RA	NC	NC	+ 4	+ 4
Helena	FS SO	NC	NC	+ 3	+ 3
	FS RD	NC	NC		
Lewistown	BLM DO	NC	NC	+ 4	+ 4
	BLM RA	NC	NC		
Missoula	FS RO	FS RO	FS RO	+ 3	+ 3
	FS SO	FS SO	FS SO		
	FS RD	FS RD	FS RD		
	BLM RA				
Miles City	BLM DO	NC	NC	+16	+16
	BLM RA(2)	NC	NC		
Sheridan	FS RD	NC	NC	+ 4	+ 4
Changes of less than 3 each in eight communities				+ 1	+ 1
Net change:				-66	-66

Note: BLM SO = State Office, BLM DO = District Office, BLM RA = Resource Area, FS SO = Supervisor's Office, FS RD = Ranger District, NC = No change

Although relatively unaffected in terms of the number of employees, the administering agency of the current FS offices in Ashland and Ft. Howe would be changed as a result of the Interchange. The public would continue to do business with these offices in the same manner as they did prior to the Interchange, but both offices would be administered by BLM.

C. Lands and Minerals

The public room and lands and minerals records for both FS and BLM would remain in the BLM State Office in Billings. Minerals adjudication functions would continue to be done at the BLM State Office in Billings. Records and minerals leasing services for North and South Dakota would also be provided by this office. All of these functions would be done through the establishment of an Interagency Records Center. Opportunities to provide more decentralized access to lands and minerals records would be evaluated after interagency automated records systems become operational. Case work and case files would be maintained at the local offices of the agency having jurisdiction over the lands and minerals.

The BLM and the FS would use a cooperative, shared services approach to operating the Interagency Records Center. Each agency would finance and assign employees to the Center in accordance with its share of the Center's workload, and the employees with the needed skills would do the work, regardless of their employing agency.

Supervision of all field minerals operations would be performed by the surface management agency, except that minerals operations on Indian lands would continue to be supervised by the BLM. After the Interchange, the minerals staff associated with current field operations would be redistributed between the BLM the FS in accordance with the changes in workload that would result from the Interchange. There would thus be no disruption of on-going operations.

D. Public Service

The Interchange proposal provides for improved public service in minerals management by placing surface and minerals estate management in the same agency. The FS would be responsible for leasing the minerals estate within its area of jurisdiction.

The establishment of an Interagency Records Center and viewing room in Billings would provide one-stop access to lands and minerals records. The Center would insure that essential services are maintained as the Forest Service assumes more minerals management responsibility. It would also help set the stage for more decentralized public access to both Forest Service and BLM records as automated systems become operational.

The number of dual permits held by public land users would decrease. Many actions that now require two permits would only require one after the Interchange.

The Interchange presents each agency with an opportunity to improve service while reducing cost. Elimination of unnecessary vehicles, facilities, and duplicated equipment would reduce overhead costs and permit each agency to

maintain its ability to provide essential services while minimizing affects of budget reductions on major resource management programs. In the future, cooperators, permittees, and other users would have to contact only one agency in a given geographic area. Management practices and policies would be more responsive to public needs and concerns.

The proposed consolidation of BLM and FS offices would strengthen on-the-ground management. The common set of authorities and regulations that are anticipated as a result of the proposed Interchange legislation would permit greater decentralization of operations within each agency. As an example, consolidation of jurisdictions would increase efficiency in protection and management of archaeological resources. Responsiveness to cooperators, permittees, users, and the public at large would be improved by the increased opportunities to provide one-stop service from a single agency.

IV. ANTICIPATED COSTS AND SAVINGS

A. Implementation Costs

Personnel costs	\$ 859,000
Space costs	157,000
Other costs	112,000
Total	\$ 1,128,000

B. Savings During First 5 Years

Personnel savings	\$ 3,195,000
Space savings	564,000
Other savings	0
Total	\$ 3,759,000

C. Average Annual Savings After Full Implementation--\$1,302,000 (Most of these savings result from reduced personnel costs.)

V. ACTIONS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INDEPENDENTLY OF INTERCHANGE

Offices in Billings, Butte, Dillon, Great Falls, and Missoula should be co-located. Co-location, without Interchange, means that each agency would share the same facilities but would retain its current (separate) identity and organization.

Co-location would permit reduction of operating costs presently associated with maintaining separate facilities and equipment. It would permit sharing of office space to reduce fixed costs and would also provide some opportunities to share common activities, such as clerical support and public information, to facilitate public access and promote interagency cooperation. Sharing of heavy equipment and personnel with scarce technical skills is a concept that would be implemented wherever possible.

